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Department of State

INCOMING TELEGRAM

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ACTION OCS-06

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R 261328Z JUL 82
FM AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 829

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAN SALVADOR 6181

EO 12065: GDS 7/21/88 (LANNON, GEORGE C) OR-C
TAGS: CASC, (SULLIVAN, JOHN J)
SUBJ: (U) W/W JOHN J. SULLIVAN

REF: STATE 198380

EXCISE F

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1. C - ENTIRE TEXT

2. AN ORGANIZED REVIEW OF DEATH RECORDS IS AN INTERESTING IDEA, BUT ONE UNLIKELY TO PRODUCE RESULTS, UNLESS IDEA IS TO KEEP CONSUL OCCUPIED WITH DISINTERNMENT OF UNIDENTIFIED CORPSES. POOR RECORDS AND LARGE NUMBERS OF UNIDENTIFIED CORPSES IN EL SALVADOR MAKE SUCCESS UNLIKELY. WE ESTIMATE THAT DURING THE FIRST 3 MONTHS OF 1981 APPROXIMATELY 4,000 PEOPLE WERE KILLED BY POLITICALLY RELATED VIOLENCE AND 65 PERCENT OF THESES PEOPLE WERE UNIDENTIFIED. WE WERE EXTREMELY LUCKLY TO LOCATE THE RECORD RELATING TO THE BODY THAT WAS RECENTLY EXHUMED. DECEMBER RECORDS OF NUEVO CUSCATLAN MAKE NO MENTION OF THE BODY THAT WE DISCOVERED. THE DEATH REPORT WAS NEVER FILED. IT WAS SENT TO SANTA TECLA DURING CHRISTMAS SEASON WHERE IT WAS LOST UNTIL RECENTLY. ONLY BY CHECKING POSTAL RECEIPTS WERE OFFICIALS ABLE TO LOCATE THIS RECORD. THIS PARTICULAR INCIDENT DOES NOT STRIKE US AS AN EXAMPLE OF GOES OBSTRUCTION.

(b)(1)-(b)(5)

[redacted]

3. EVEN BURIALS ARE OFTEN UNRECORDED. THERE ARE NO BURIAL RECORDS, FOR EXAMPLE, FOR BODIES DUMPED IN EL PLAYON. THE TWO BODIES THAT WE EXHUMED LAST YEAR IN METALIO WERE ALSO UNRECORDED. SALVADORAN BURIAL RECORDS DO NOT INDICATE WHETHER A BODY IS THAT OF A FOREIGNER. THIS INFORMATION COMES ONLY FROM THE MEMORIES OF PEOPLE WHO SAW THE BODY. THE TERMS "FOREIGNR" OR "GRINGO" ARE VERY LOOSELY USED HERE. USUALLY, THESE TERMS REFER TO A TALL, LIGHT-SKINNED PERSON WHO IS NOT FROM THE AREA WHERE THE BODY WAS DISCOVERED.

4. WE DO NOT FEEL THAT THE AVAILABLE EVIDENCE SUGGESTS THAT THE GOES IS OBSTRUCTING THIS INVESTIGATION. IN THIS INVESTIGATION, AS IN ALL OTHERS, THE GOES IS HAMPERED BY LIMITED RESOURCES TO CARE FOR THE LIVING, INCLUDING ABOUT 200,000 DISPLACED PERSONS, TO MAINTAIN AN INFRASTRUCTURE AND ECONOMY UNDER CONSTANT GUERRILLA ATTACK AND TO FIGHT A WAR, POORLY MAINTAINED OR NON-EXISTENT RECORDS, AND GREAT NUMBERS OF UNIDENTIFIED CORPOSES. THE GOVERNMENT HAS FOLLOWED UP ON ALL LEADS WHICH WE HAVE PROVIDED.
HINTON

82 JUL 26 PM 2:54

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR

REVIEWED BY [signature] DATE 11/29/83

RDS☐or XDS☐EXT. DATE _____
TS AUTH. _____ REASON(S) _____
ENDORSE EXISTING MARKINGS ☐
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